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# HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE  
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Subject: "TIP-TOP ASPARAGUS" Information from Office of Marketing Services, War Food Administration.

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Tender asparagus tips are "tops" for most folks, whether they come from your garden or your grocery store.

Asparagus...once planted...is one of the few spring callers in the garden that shoots up uninvited...uninvited but always welcome. Asparagus is a perennial plant that requires 3 years of cultivation before a normal crop may be harvested. But once planted asparagus is a hardy guest which calls for little service, other than room service...that is, space to grow with no competition from weeds.

A blanket of fertilizer tossed over an asparagus bed, either in the spring or at the end of the cutting season, improves the quality of the asparagus. With reasonable care asparagus beds have been known to produce for at least 15 to 20 years.

If you must depend on the markets for your asparagus, you will be glad to know that because of an early spring you may see more asparagus in the stores this year than usual. Two varieties are sold...the green tip and the purple tip. The tall slender green stalk of fresh asparagus has a tip of clustered scales that seems almost moist to the touch. When the asparagus gets older those tips open up and dry out, fringing a bit at the edges.

Green asparagus, like other green vegetables, contains some Vitamin A while the bleached type does not. Small amounts of other vitamins and minerals are also present, but fresh asparagus can be measured best in relation to that exhilarating feeling which comes with the first signs of spring.

For many hundreds of seasons asparagus has been valued highly, first as a medicine, like a spring tonic, then later as a vegetable. The early Romans wrote about asparagus with much enthusiasm.

And today women enjoy finding new ways to serve it. Cheese, hard-cooked eggs and white sauce are the popular three that combine tastefully and attractively with asparagus.

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